

Reply to Office Action of November 9, 2006

**REMARKS**

Claims 7-18 and 21-31 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 21 and 27 are amended. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter; (3) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and/or (4) place the application in better form for appeal, if necessary. Entry is thus requested.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 8-18 are allowed.

The Office Action rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claim 7, the Examiner argued that “Applicant[s]’ limitation of ‘configured to adjust a space between the upper tub cover and the lower tub cover’ is considered new matter,” and “[t]his broad ‘configured to’ language reads on various structures not supported by Applicant[s]’ own disclosure.” However, under U.S. patent law, Applicants need only disclose one embodiment that satisfies the claim language. Such an embodiment is disclosed in Figures 7-9 and the corresponding disclosure of the present application. Accordingly, this rejection

should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claims 21-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Lee, U.S. Patent No. 5,657,650. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 21 and 27 have been amended to recite, *inter alia*, that the lower tub cover is “in the form of a substantially annular ring with a centrally located opening” and that the “at least one washing water passage guides washing water to the centrally located opening and into an inner tub of the washing machine.” Lee does not disclose such features, or the respective claimed combinations of independent claims 21 and 27. Rather, Lee discloses passing washing water through spraying holes 162 located along a periphery of lower tub cover 130 into spin tub 230.

Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 21 and 27 over Lee should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 22-26 and 28-31 are allowable over Lee at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 21 and 27, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

### CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

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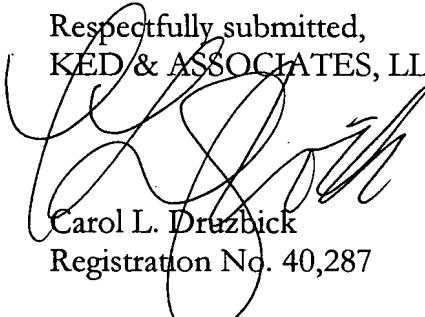
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If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,  
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